

Downtown Commission Meeting  
Minutes of April 9, 2010  
8:30 a.m.  
1st Floor North Conference Room - City Hall

**Present:** Acting Chairman Jan Davis, Presiding; Mr. John D. Rogers, Ms. Kitty Love, Mr. Byron Greiner, Mr. Michael McDonough, Mr. Matthew Sprouse and Mr. Guadalupe Chavarria

**Absent:** Vice-Chairman Dwight Butner, Ms. Pamela Myers and Mr. Bruce Hazzard

Acting Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 8:30 p.m. and informed the audience of the public hearing process.

**Administrative**

- ? Mr. Greiner moved to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2010, meeting, noting that some comments attributed to Ms. Love were Ms. Myers' statements and vice versa (to be amended by City staff). This motion was seconded by Mr. Sprouse and carried unanimously.

**Downtown Master Plan Implementation Updates**

Regarding the Transportation and Parking Subcommittee, Mr. Chavarria explained that they have been discussing handicapped parking and billing. They are in the process of looking at models in other cities. Mr. Greiner said that we are asking the City to not allow the continue storage of vehicles on the streets in a metered parking space with the use of a placard.

Regarding the Arts Subcommittee, Ms. Love explained that they are researching the creation of an arts commission to interface with the community on cultural programming.

In response to Ms. Love, Urban Planner Jessica Bernstein said that a process needs to be formalized to vet items for implementation through the Downtown Commission prior to them being presented to Council.

**Pack Park Permitting and Uses**

Urban Planner Alan Glines said staff is working on a proposal to create some priorities for what streets would be closed and how often.

Director of Building Safety Robert Griffin said that he has had two meetings regarding street closures, especially with Pack Square Park coming on line. Staff has developed one procedure for street closures city-wide, but there will be several policies that would apply throughout the City. Our first priority is public safety, second is transportation and then, in no particular order, frequency, time of event, duration of event and number of times those streets or areas were closed. As far as Pack Square Park, unless there is some objection to the policy, they will recommend implementing immediately (all applicants have been notified) South Pack Square at either N. Market or Spruce St. must remain open Monday through Saturday due to public safety and transit. South Pack Square can be closed on Sundays. The only exceptions will be applications, through the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department, for City co-sponsorship. In staff's report to Council will be the streets requested to be closed, how it affects either transit or public safety, a map along with the duration of the event, and a contingency plan for Council consideration.

On behalf of the Downtown Association, Mr. Greiner said the Association has prepared a resolution to City Council requesting that the Downtown Commission be involved in the review of street closures for special events in the Central Business District (after staff review), prior to it being presented to City Council. He asked for the Commission's thoughts on whether they want to formally vote on street closures. Ms. Bernstein said that staff will work with Building Safety Staff and other departments on how it would affect the current process. They would also need to discuss the parameters of the review, e.g., timeline, what type of approval, special meetings to discuss the request, parameters for the Downtown Commission to use when faced with a street closure application, and any amendment to the ordinance regarding formal approval, etc.

Mr. Griffin said that currently any reviews are via e-mail to the affected departments and there are timeframes by which we require a response. If no response is given, then it is automatic approval by that department. He suggested that process be retained by the Downtown Commission as well. On a related matter, staff will take a stronger role in notifying the surrounding property owners, e.g. reverse 911.

In response to Ms. Love about the permitting process, Mr. Griffin said that while the ordinance allows us to close streets for festivals in business districts, we want to discourage the use of streets and push people into the parks.

Ms. Love was concerned that the two weeks notification time period to the adjoining property owners is not enough time if they have a hardship with the street closure.

Mr. Greiner read the Asheville Downtown Association resolution with one item being that they recommended City Council delegate authority of review and final approval of street closures in the downtown to the Downtown Commission.

Ms. Love felt there needs to be an emphatic relationship between the City and grass-roots cultural programming out of the community.

Mr. Greiner moved that the Downtown Commission have final approval, with in the Central Business District, on street closures for festivals. This motion was seconded by Mr. Rogers (noting that his second is simply about the Downtown Commission having review authority over street closures) and carried unanimously.

Urban Planner Alan Glines suggested another special meeting of the Downtown Commission (inviting those that attended the first street closing meeting) to discuss the Downtown Commission being involved in the street closing approval process.

#### **Urban Design Subcommittee Update**

Mr. Glines said that the Urban Design Subcommittee has held many meetings and they have put Downtown Master Plan (DTMP) wording amendments into a matrix consisting of Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) reference, related action step from DTMP, current UDO requirement, proposed amendment, staff comment, and Design Action Committee comments. Strategies 4 and 5 deal mostly with the UDO changes.

Discussion was held during Mr. Glines' and Ms. Bernstein's detailed review (with maps) of the first 15 items of the 33 item matrix, with emphasis on the Design Action Committee's recommendations. Some items, including height maximum, will be discussed again with the Design action Committee. Mr. Glines said that due to time constraints, the remainder of the matrix would be discussed at the Commission's next meeting

There was a brief discussion about expanding the Central Business District to include Asheland Avenue, Coxe Avenue and some streets to the east of the current boundary.

#### **Downtown Association**

Mr. Greiner said that they are getting ready for the Downtown After 5 events.

#### **Downtown Task Force**

Urban Planner Alan Glines said they spent most of their time talking about the street closure policy. Wayfinding signs are continuing to be installed, with some base covers.

Ms. Love suggested staff to double-check the Wayfinding sign off I-240 onto Charlotte from the open cut as it may be blocking a N.C. Dept. of Transportation sign.

#### **Other Business**

##### **Preservation Month**

Ms. Bernstein said that May is National Preservation Month and outlined several events that the Asheville-Buncombe Historic Resources Commission is planning.

Mr. Greiner moved that the Downtown Commission co-sponsor these events, which will require no financial participation. This motion was seconded by Mr. McDonough and carried unanimously.

#### **Adjournment**

Acting Chairman Davis moved to adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.